

UPDATE

November 2014

Stormwater Ponds to be Dredged

Toronto Water has contracted with Toronto & Region Conservation (TRCA) to remove the sediments from several of the park's stormwater management ponds: Wendigo Pond and Howard and Ridout Ponds this winter; and the Lower Duck Pond in the following year. This maintenance work is necessary in order for them to operate effectively, i.e. prevent localized flooding, and improve downstream water quality. In preparation, the water levels in Wendigo Pond were lowered earlier this fall, which will discourage (appropriately so) turtle hibernation. TRCA's work will include the manual removal of any remaining turtles, as well as sediment disposal, and site restoration.

Forestry Update

A few sites are being considered for a prescribed burn in spring 2015. A variety of large invasive trees will be identified for removal over the winter months as part of the ongoing restoration program. They will be marked prior to removal. Staff will be continuing with understory invasive removal this fall and over the winter throughout the park.

Forestry staff will be planting a variety of restoration sites around the park with native plant stock in the upcoming weeks. Staff will also be planting a variety of young black oaks that have been grown from acorns collected from the park out into a variety of areas where Black Oaks are present in the park, but limited regeneration is taking place. There are additional sites in west end parks where these trees will be planted as well where large black oaks are known.

Signage Projects

Both Phase 2 of the interpretive sign project and the fishing-related sign project are nearing completion. The interpretive signs in are production and could possibly still be installed later this fall. The final versions are posted [here](#). Some of the fishing/wildlife protection signs are already installed toward the north end of Grenadier Pond. Additional signs, including a map sign indicating the limited areas where fishing is allowed, are still to be completed and installed. A bookmark highlighting fish species and responsible fishing guidelines has been produced and will be used in the roll-out of the new fishing zone limits once all signs are in place. The bookmark and close-to-final versions of some of the signs are posted [here](#).

Ongoing Efforts to Protect Wildlife at Grenadier Pond

Illegal and hazardous behaviours continued at the pond this year, including waterfowl tangled in fishing gear and unleashed dogs in the pond. Another Family Fishing Day was held in July, as well as a picnic-related fishing event in June. We have been assured that Family Fishing Day will not be held in High Park in 2015. The City has decided to rotate the locations. This alleviates some of the fishing pressure on High Park, and addresses partially the concerns that our committee had expressed. Also, the Permit Office has been advised to not give permits for any public fishing events without prior approval from local Park Operations.

Stewardship Activities

The volunteers have been very busy over the spring, summer and early fall, with twice monthly regular sessions plus extra sessions for Greenhouse and Boulevard Bed work. The Elite Invasive Squad had many sessions in the Spring and Fall. Our Native Plant Sale was held on May 11.

Over 1200 native plants were planted in spring and over 1000 seedlings of native grasses, wildflowers and shrubs were planted in the Tablelands in the fall. New fencing was erected in the Boulevard Beds, new wildflowers were planted, and ongoing maintenance was carried out. The majority of our time was spent removing invasive species including garlic mustard, hedge parsley, and Himalayan balsam. Seed collection in the Nursery was done in October and Buckthorn removal is underway for 3 fall sessions. A public native wildflower walk held on August 17 focused on our restoration sites. Winter educational sessions will be planned soon. See our [website](#) for more details.

Other Highlights

High Park Nature recently hosted a meeting of the Karner Blue Ontario working group.

The new ROM Field Guide to Butterflies of Ontario features High Park as one of 14 good places in the province to study butterflies.

Snapping turtles were observed leaving High Park toward the Queensway to lay eggs. We will investigate the possibility of installing turtle barriers in this area.

The PanAm Games will bring certain running and cycling events through High Park. We are liaising with Park staff on preparations through the High Park Resource Group.